

exclaimed that this was mere sorcery and devil's work; the man was not Arsenius ; in fact, he was not even a man at all, but a mere counterfeit, an illusion of the senses produced by Athanasius' horrible proficiency in the black art. And we are told that this ingenious explanation proved so convincing to the assembly, and created such a fury of resentment against Athanasius, that Dionysius, the Imperial officer who had been deputed by Constantine to represent him at the Council, had to hurry Athanasius on shipboard to save him from personal violence.

There was clearly so little corroborative evidence against Athanasius that the Council dared not convict him. But, as they were equally determined not to acquit him, they appointed a commission of enquiry to collect testimony on the spot in the Mare-otis district of Egypt with respect to the story of the Broken Chalice. The six commissioners were chosen in secret session by the anti-Athanasian faction. Athanasius protested without avail against the selection: they were all, he said, his private enemies. The commission sailed for Egypt, and Athanasius determined, with characteristic boldness, to go to Constantinople, confront the Emperor, and appeal for justice and a fair trial at the fountain-head. Athanasius met the Emperor as he was riding into the city, and stood before him in his path. What followed is best told by Constantine himself in a letter which he wrote to the Bishop of Tyre.* Here are his own words:

*Sozomen II., 28.